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will lighten the labor of each; a society which in truth will mean a new heaven and a new earth where man, untrammelled by want and evil conditions, may press rapidly onward in his development and mount to the utmost possibilities of his being.

IRA W. HOWERTH.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

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### A FUNDAMENTAL TEST FOR DETERMINISM.

Among all the methods of approach by which men have sought to deliver the solving word upon the vexed problem of free-will, I do not remember to have seen anywhere attempts to test the validity of the deterministic or necessarian arguments by applying to the process of the argumentation the conclusions of those arguments. The test would take the form of this question: What is the effect upon the validity of the reasoning process by which determinism or necessarianism arrives at its conclusions, if we acknowledge that those conclusions are true?

This test may well be called a fundamental one; for should it prove necessary to deny logical cogency to the reasoning involved in order that the conclusions should not fall to the ground, then we should have hit at last upon the most economical method of banishing the whole contention to the limbo of dead problems.

Recall for a moment the declaration of the necessarian that conduct is wholly determined by circumstances; that is to say, by external conditions. All our actions upon which moral judgment may rightly be passed are in a causal sequence, of which the governing antecedent is some physical event that in its effect upon conduct falls inevitably under the control of unbroken law. There is no peradventure about the consequent, about the effect, when the antecedent or set of such is given.

“But look!” says the determinist; “you cannot deny that in any case of cause and effect, the effect is determined as much

by the nature of the object upon which that force is expended as upon the force itself. The falling of the raindrops upon a rock makes little or no change; while similar drops falling upon mud-flats leave impressions that come to light centuries later, indelibly stamped upon the stony flags. Conduct is not determined merely by the physical events in the environment but by these events plus the character of the man whose conduct is in question. Put a coward in the smoking towns surrounding an angry Vesuvius and he will rend the ties of blood and even friendship in mad zeal for his life. Set some devoted priest in that withering region, and the little finger of need will stay his departing feet."

Both physics and psychology will agree that the determinist has the whip hand in the argument. Yet what is the issue? James is surely right in saying that the victor is merely a "soft-shell necessarian." He has himself, in the very act of winning, passed under the ban. Free-will has found no helper here. Objective law, law uncontrollable by the so-called moral agent, still commands the field. The event lies completely anticipated in the bosom of the past, and all the wealth of friendly urgency or hostile malediction that forms a part of this same past can compel, indeed, but never persuade. Persuasion is a word ill-assorted with the claims of the determinist. It looks at you, indeed, from the midst of his vocabulary, but when you bid it speak, it can patter only of natural law and constraint. The river foams about the impeding rocks and therein behaves quite differently from the sluggish oil or still more sluggish lava; yet no one applauds or condemns river or oil or lava for its appropriate mode of behavior. In no different wise does conduct issue from character and circumstances. Quite as objective as the events in the physical world, it passes from phase to phase and the moral agent can in no whit control it. The moral agent indeed constitutes one factor in the issue, but controls neither in any other sense than do the natures of a stone and a lump of putty control the issue of a blow struck upon each. This is obviously not the sense in which the defender of free-will employs the term; and, with apologies to the determinist, it is doubtful whether the unreflective citizen finds

his practical attitude toward the affair of self-direction comfortably at home in this conception.

Now the determinist must needs look elsewhere for his conclusive arguments than into the feelings of mankind; for while ready enough to admit that at times what they would not, this they do, just as stoutly at other times do they hold by their conviction of self-direction and that in no "stony" sense. So the determinist does look into the physical world, and finds that there the assumption of the inevitableness of events is a good working hypothesis. But the human body too he notes as a part of that physical world, and conduct as merely muscular adaptation to the environment. If he has a good working hypothesis for one part, a large part of the physical world, why should he not, why ought he not to, apply it to all parts.

Moreover, in the psychical sphere—which may or may not be in effective connection with conduct—he is not without a motive for his conclusion. People are pretty generally ready to admit that they act in accordance with the strongest motive. The conflict of motives is conceived precisely after the analogy of a conflict of forces. Conduct, like motion, is the algebraic sum of the several factors, motives in the one case, moment forces in the other.

Here, indeed, the defenders of free-will very properly take issue with the deterministic interpretation of the word "strong" as it occurs in this connection on the popular tongue. An ambiguity lurks in it. There is a squint two ways, toward the *vis a tergo* and the *vis a fronte*. A man may be "strongly" compelled indeed, but so too may he be "strongly" persuaded. There is no persuasion in motives as conceived by the determinist, except a persuasion of the "stony" sort already noted, which is so fundamental a reinterpretation of the word as used by the ordinary citizen as to amount to substitution of another term. The ordinary citizen is at no loss to understand this new meaning, but he is equally ready to say that he has a different term to describe that condition. "Compulsion" is that term; and to redefine persuasion as the psychical variety of compulsion is to purge these two terms of the mutual opposition that gives each its place in his vocabulary. All of this amounts to

saying that men are under an illusion in describing the experience in question as persuasion. The experience interpreted is still to be found but, if the determinist is right, its old interpretation must be discarded.

The serious thing about the situation is that perhaps the determinist really is right. That the ordinary citizen had a different interpretation of this experience of persuasion may well be true; but it may be no less true that he is altogether wrong in his view. Surely it is no argument against the correctness of the determinist that he forces us to change our view of the meaning that we attached to the experience of persuasion. He can, to be sure, no longer draw cogent reasons from the popular employment of terms, for it has already appeared that this use is ambiguous; and, furthermore, were it ever so explicit, it still might be incorrect.

Here, then, let us see what can be done with the test proposed at the outset of this discussion. Let us assume for the moment that the determinist is right, and let us make a thoroughgoing application of his conclusion, not alone to those outer physical motions of the body that readily enough pass under the name of conduct in so far as they express an end, but also to the inner activities of thought. There appears to be no more objection in principle to regarding as conduct the thinking process, or the finer motions among the brain molecules that express some end, than so to regard those gross adaptations of the entire organism which are so public.

The new problem takes this form: Is the sort of conduct involved in drawing a conclusion causally determined? That I may tie to a concrete case, I will choose as the special object for this test the very process of argumentation employed by the determinist in fixing his conclusion that all conduct is causally determined.

No one can hesitate a moment to acknowledge that there are cases of psychic compulsion. Thought does not always move logically to an adequate conclusion, but it reaches a conclusion nevertheless. Evidence to the point is furnished us by the enumeration of fallacies in the text-books of formal logic, in the facts of social suggestibility, in the uncritical adoption of

beliefs and opinions. Take the ordinary citizen again, whose thoughts should happen to proceed in this fashion: The ground is wet if rain has fallen; and since the ground is wet, rain must have fallen. A fair example of psychical compulsion. Again, I find that those low-crowned Derby hats, that used to go by the name of "dips," are altogether handsome and elegant articles of apparel until fashion decrees their banishment. My fellow traveler is beyond measure persuaded of the importance of a high tariff for the country's prosperity, for he calls himself a Republican. On my other side in the same car I knock elbows with a man that is incontinently sure of the verbal inspiration of Scripture because all his spiritual guides, decades long, have stoutly maintained that doctrine.

Yes, there is no doubt that we could bore ourselves to extinction with an interminable procession of instances where the process of thinking has been one of psychical compulsion. But what attitude does every careful thinker take to all such facts as these? They are the plague of his life, and he routs them wherever he may with all the valorous energy of a reformer. Thought on those terms is no thought worth having. Of this he is quite certain. No validity can for him attach to any conclusion reached by roads of that sort. Can anyone make him assured that his reasonings issue after that fashion, then, despite all feelings of rationality and logical consistency by which their meager reality gets itself decently clad, he will flout every once-so-valiant argument, abjure his conclusions, and begin once more his patient search.

Now suppose you tell such a man that he cannot escape; that the whole process of his thinking has suffered an incurable infection; that however logically he may feel that he is drawing out the steps of his argument, there is nevertheless a causal compulsion dogging every advance; that there is no such thing as uncaused thought. What will such a man say? First of all, that he is being deprived of all standards of right thinking; that in consequence, he cannot even allow credit to his conviction that you are correct in your argument whereby you are deposing his reason from its position of fancied pre-eminence; in short, that critical estimate of the course of

thought is impossible. But he cannot stop there. The distinction between truth and error falls to the ground. For aught anyone can say, the gossip's opinion is as good as the statesman's. And finally he is of a mind not to be greatly disturbed by your argument anyway, since you were causally compelled to take the view that you adopted. From all of which it would appear that you are hoisted by your own petard.

There may be some among the less critical that will incline to contest this conclusion on the ground that the doctrine of necessarianism is not meant to cover thought as well as conduct. This distinction would be worth making were it not true that we have to make choice of conclusions just as we make choice of courses of action. In both cases we may do it blindly, that is to say, we may do it without consideration of the reasons leading one way or another. Then we certainly are in the toils of compulsion. But we may choose reasonably. If so, and if there is any cogency in the arguments that I have proposed, we may be assured that it is possible to be rescued from subjection to the force from behind.

Men with a theory that differs from the theories of others upon a given question like to give a psychological explanation for the occurrence of such false (?) theories. Let us ask, then, how necessarianism could have commended itself to the thinkers that have marshalled bold arguments in its behalf. In my judgment, this commendation was possible because the thinkers in question failed to reflect upon the meaning of this very process of reasoning which gave birth to their theory. The presuppositions really involved in that process were of such a character as to nullify its apparent issue. Experience in this section of philosophy has not been different from experience in other parts of the same field. Man neglects to consider how he does his task in his eagerness to get that task done.

CHARLES THEODORE BURNETT.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE.